MAKING A CASE: CREATING A PROFILE

- Top Down Typology
- Bottom up Approaches
- Case Study: John Duffy
What is offender profiling?

- Originally coined by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Providing a likely description of an offender based on an analysis of
  - Crime scene
  - The victim
  - Other available evidence
What is offender profiling?

- BUT - most controversial and misunderstood area of criminal detection (Davies 1977)
- Distorted by media perception and popular fiction, eg:
  - The Silence of the Lambs
  - Cracker
  - Waking the Dead
- Reality - a viable process but unproven, subjective and rarely providing specific identities
Goals of profiling

- Offender profiling does not solve crime but provides a means of narrowing the range of potential suspects
- **Holmes & Holmes 1996** - three major goals of profiling:
  1. **Social and psychological assessment**
     - Basic information: personality, age, race, sex, employment, education, marital status
  2. **Psychological evaluation of belongings**
     - Possessions which may associate offender with crime scene, eg: souvenirs, photos, pornography
  3. **Interviewing suggestions and strategies**
     - Specific interviewing strategies developed for particular offenders
Approaches to profiling - Top Down

The American method - a ‘top-down’ approach

- FBI research (1978)
  1. In-depth interviews with convicted murderers
  2. Detailed information from behavioural science unit
     - Classification system for several serious crimes (including rape and murder)
     - Eg: murders classified as ‘organised’ or ‘disorganised’ (Rossiter et al 1988)
Approaches to profiling - Top Down

**Organised**
Features:
- Planned crimes
- Self-control
- Covers tracks
- Victim is stranger

Characteristics:
- Intelligent
- Skilled occupation
- Socially competent
- Angry/depressed

**Disorganised**
Features:
- Unplanned crimes
- Haphazard
- Leaves clues

Characteristics:
- Socially inadequate
- Unskilled
- First/last born child
- Lives alone
- Knows victim
- Confused/frightened

- **Aim**: To test reliability of organised/disorganised typologies
- **Method**: Content analysis using psychometric method of multi-dimensional scaling (MDS)
- MDS applied to 100 cases to see if features of typographies distinctively different
- **Procedure**: Cases: published accounts of serial killers in USA collected over many years by independent researcher
- Third crime of each serial killer analysed
- **Crime Classification Manual** (Douglas, 1992) used to classify crimes as organised or disorganised

- **Results:**
  - Twice as many disorganised as organised crime-scene actions identified.
  - Only two crime scene behaviours co-occurred in organised typographies: body concealed (70%), & sexual activity (75%).
  - Only sex acts & vaginal rape occur in two thirds of disorganised crime.
  - Most other behaviours co-occur regularly in less than half crimes committed.
  - Further stats analysis: failed to separate organised & disorganised variables.

- **Conclusions:**
  - No real distinction between two types of serial murder: all crimes have organised element
  - Distinctions between serial killers: function of different ways they exhibit disorganised aspects of their activities
  - Better to look at individual personality
Bottom Up Approach

The British method - a ‘bottom-up’ approach

- Later start and less organised
- **Canter (1980s)**
- Based on psychological theories and methodologies (cognitive social)
- Theories formulated to show how and why variations in criminal behavior occur
- Consistencies **within** actions of offenders
- Differences between them
- More objective & reliable (than Top Down)
Bottom Up Approach:

Main factors

1. **Interpersonal coherence**
   - Degree of violence/control
   - Type of victim (eg: Ted Bundy: all young women)

2. **Significance of time and place**
   - When and where crime takes place

3. **Forensic awareness**
   - Police records of previous offenders - links to subsequent crimes
**Bottom Up Approach: Canter & Heritage (1990)**

- **Aim**: To identify a behaviour pattern from similarities between offences
- **Method**: Content analysis (smallest-space analysis)
  - 66 sexual offences from various police forces (committed by 27 offenders)
  - 33 offence variables found linked to behaviour characteristic (eg; variable 2 - ‘surprise attack’)
- **Results**: Following variables central to 66 cases:
  - vaginal intercourse
  - impersonal language
  - No reaction to victim
  - surprise attack
  - Victim’s clothing disturbed
Bottom Up: Canter & Heritage (1990)

- **Results** (continued):
  - Suggests pattern of behaviour: impersonal attack & irrelevant response to victim
  - Less central elements: attempted intimacy, sexual behaviour, overt violence & aggression

- **Conclusions:**
  - Useful as all five aspects contribute to all sex offences (but in different individual patterns)
  - Can determine whether two or more offences were committed by same person
  - Analysis extended to other crimes: useful patterns of behaviour
Limitations of profiling

Limitations

• Only appropriate for **small number of** specific crimes (*Holmes & Holmes 1996*):
  1. Sadistic torture (sex assaults)
  2. Evisceration (tearing out gut/bowels)
  3. Postmortem slashing/cutting
  4. Rape
  5. Motiveless fire starting
  6. Satanic and ritualistic crime

• Problem of assessing profiling: cases rare; difficult to analyse effectively
Limitations of profiling

Other problems

- **Reliability** of interviewing (to provide basis for theories)
- Insufficient empirical investigation
- Too instructive/intuitive
- **Bias** in police analysis (Barnum effect)
- Ethics
Does profiling work?

See surveys

- **Copson G. (1995)** ‘Is offender profiling really necessary?’ - a study of offender profiling (Police research group)
- Questionnaires to police officers - results:
  - 80% - profiling useful
  - 14% - assisted in solving case
  - 3% - provided ID of offender
- **Conclusions**
  - Satisfaction depended on individual profiler
  - Little consistency of approach
Does profiling work?

Surveys (contd)

- **Pinizzotto & Funkel (1990)** research: ‘Are professional profilers more accurate than laypersons?’ Compared groups of:
  - Profilers
  - Detectives
  - Psychologists
  - Students

- ..in their ability to write profiles of a homicide and sex offence (closed cases)

- **Results**: profilers significantly more accurate on sex offence but detectives more accurate on homicide
Does profiling work?

- Case of Rachel Nickell murder investigation in 1994
- Elaborate profiling - failed conviction
Case Study: John Duffy

- Case of John Duffy: the railway rapist
- **Canter 1994** - profiling led to Duffy’s 1988 conviction for rape & murder of several women

**Profiling:**

- Analysis of 24 sexual assaults and two murders in London over previous four years
  - What was said to victims?
  - Were clothes pulled/torn/cut?
  - How did attacker deal with victim after assault?
Case Study: John Duffy

- Computer used to analyse patterns
- Canter’s social psychology analysis of behaviour at crime scene focusing on:
  - Relationship (if any) to victim
  - Degree of domination over victim
  - Clues to relationships with others and how powerful/secure in everyday life
  - Geographical profiling - use of mental maps
- Profile created July 1986
# Canter’s profile of John Duffy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Duffy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives in Kilburn/Cricklewood</td>
<td>Lived in Kilburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, no children</td>
<td>Married, infertile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has marriage problems</td>
<td>Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loner, few friends</td>
<td>Only two friends (co-offenders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically small, unattractive</td>
<td>5ft 4in with acne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial artist, body-builder</td>
<td>Member of martial arts club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to dominate women</td>
<td>Violent, attacked wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasies of rape, bondage</td>
<td>Tied up his wife before sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An extraordinarily accurate profile

- Duffy originally placed as 1,505th on list of 2,000 suspects
- Post-profile large-scale surveillance operation
- Arrested November 1986